

HoGent

EDUCATION
HEALTH
SOCIAL WORK

Keep an eye on your friends even when you don't know them

Drug use in the goa scene

dr. Tina Van Havere – University College Ghent, Belgium

Goa



GOA

- Visitors of GOA parties were 5 times more likely to use illegal drugs
- 8/10 GOA partygoers used an illegal drugs
- Goa parties: more cannabis, speed and coke

In depth interviews = insiders' perspective!

- 17 interviews, 19 respondents
- snow ball sampling
- 17 male; 2 female
- mean age 24y

Main findings - Evolutions in the goa scene

“Now you have more big parties, more formally organised. Five years ago, you received a telephone: “Tonight party, come and bring your CDs and let’s go wild”. Often, this meant two days partying. Nowadays, you’re preparing for two or three months. You have to have a live act. When the party is further away, you have to make the line-up very attractive. They have become more choosy. It’s much more moaning and complaining. They all want more, but it cannot cost anything.” (Man, 25 years old)

Main findings - The freedom to use drugs

“That is one of the unfortunate things, that people don’t live anymore according to the idea, the principle that we had to make the world a better place by starting with ourselves. Giving a good example to everyone (...). For a lot of people, it has become a ‘normal’ party. (...) The music is still there, but the reason to party has changed for the young people. (...) I’m starting to see that – for the younger generation - it is a sanctuary for using as much drugs as possible.” (Man, 31 years)

Main findings – open communication

“In my friends’ network, everybody knew very well what he was doing. Things were looked up and were talked about. (...) Yes, I think I have most information from friends. Because we talked a lot about it and things were said: ‘You shouldn’t do that’, ‘It’s better to share this’ or ‘Take a little bit of that one’”. (Woman, 25 years)

Main findings - solidarity

“[The values] are still present. It is remarkable at the festivals where I am going to: when something happens, doesn’t matter what, there’ll always be someone – even if they don’t know you – there will be someone for a moment to check whether you’re all right. Yes, I find that amazing” (Man, 31 years)

Main findings — responsible drug use

“You have to give drug use a place and keep a good balance. Keep on functioning. Make sure your daily life doesn’t suffer from your drug use.” (Woman, 32 years)

Main findings - problems

“And if there are people who get into trouble or take too much, mostly these are people who come to goa only once in a while, or for the first time and think: ‘You can use a lot of drugs at these parties and nobody is saying anything’. And they use too much and then it goes wrong.” (Man, 22 years)

Discussion

- safe environment?
 - Freedom to use
 - Solidarity
 - Responsible use
- Acute versus long term consequences
- Lessons learned not limited to the goa scene

Thank you for listening to the goa
visitors own perspectives!

Tina Van Havere
Tina.VanHavere@hogent.be